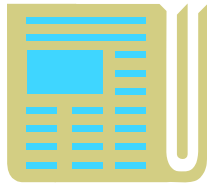




**Henry County Branch of the NAACP
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House Issues Apology for Slavery and Jim Crow

(Excerpted from Black AmericaWeb.com)

The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday, July 29, 2008 issued an unprecedented apology to black Americans for the wrongs committed against them and their ancestors who suffered under slavery and Jim Crow segregation laws.

"Today represents a milestone in our nation's efforts to remedy the ills of our past," said Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick (D-Mich.), chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The resolution, passed by voice vote, was the work of Tennessee Democrat Steve Cohen, the only white lawmaker to represent a majority black district. Cohen faces a formidable black challenger in a primary face-off in an upcoming election.

Army apologizes to soldiers convicted after 1944 Fort Lawton riot

For decades, Willie Prevost kept his secret.

Like most of his World War II Army buddies, he never told his family about his conviction for rioting during a night of violence that left a number of men injured and one dead at Seattle's Fort Lawton in 1944.

But on August 26, 2008, his family was there as the U.S. Army apologized in a ceremony to clear the names of Prevost and 27 other African-American soldiers who were convicted in a now-discredited court-martial.

Sixty-three years after they were sentenced to hard labor, and nearly all dishonorably discharged, "The Fort Lawton 28" were given military honors, with an Army band and color guard, gospel choir and speeches by U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott, Mayor Greg Nickels, King County Executive Ron Sims and Assistant Secretary of the Army Ronald James.

Only two of the veterans lived to see the day.

In total, the families of five veterans were present.

The Fort Lawton incident, which led to the largest court-martial of World War II, occurred after a clash between black soldiers and Italian prisoners of war, all of whom were housed at Fort Lawton. The morning after the riot, the body of POW Guglielmo Olivotto was found hanging from wires on an obstacle course at the base of Magnolia Bluff.



Who Am I?

I was born at Chicago's Provident Hospital, the first child of school teacher and a prominent lawyer and real estate owner. I was raised in a two-church household: St. Edmond's Episcopal Church, and Pilgrim Baptist Church. I attended Willard Elementary and Englewood High Schools. I was only sixteen years old when I enrolled at the University of Wisconsin in the fall of 1943. After attending several colleges and universities, including Lincoln University (Pa.) and the University of Michigan, where I excelled in English composition, but failed everything else, I pursued creative writing.

In my twenties, I returned to work in radio, spending five years as the "world's first Black newscaster," for a Chicago program called "Negro Newsfront," where I also managed to include a musical menu, as well as poetic works by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. In addition to my media work, I continued to dabble in real estate, advertising, and public relations; but soon turned to activism. In 1948, I ran for the Illinois legislature on the Progressive Party ticket and for the U.S. Congress as a Republican in 1952. I was a member of the Communist Party from the time I was 20, to my resignation in 1956, when I concluded that I was "just too black to be red."

I served two years in the Army, after which I began composing songs and singing. The turning point in my career came around 1960. My family was neighbors of the award-winning playwright, Lorraine Hansberry's family. I met Hansberry's husband who worked for a New York based music publishing company. I was then introduced to music in New York, which led to a recording contract with Columbia records and the recording, "Sin

and Soul." The Los Angeles Times described it as "a mosaic of poetic and musical images [with] lyrics for such popular jazz instrumentals as Nat Adderley's "Work Song," Bobby Timmons' soul jazz tune "Dat Dere" and Mongo Santamaria's "Afro Blue"; and "Bid 'Em" recorded by Mahalia Jackson, and Lena Horne.

During this time I met and soon after married singer/dancer Jean Pace.

We moved back to Chicago, where within a year, I developed three more musicals entitled "Summer in the City," "Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow," and "Opportunity Please Knock." "Opportunity Please Knock" was produced in 1967 in conjunction with the gang the Blackstone Rangers. My and my wife's work with the gang resulted in the pair being invited in 1968 by Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana. Among our "discoveries" were The Jackson Five, and actor/singer Avery Brooks.

My wife and I moved to San Francisco the following year, where I turned the comedy production "Big Time Buck White" into a musical, which ran briefly on Broadway with Muhammad Ali in the title role. I and my wife also joined with Brazilian musicians Luiz Henrique and Sivuea in the production of "Joy 69," which ran over a year in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago. During the 1970's I was artist-in-residence directing my works at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Hunter College in New York and Malcolm X College in Chicago. I premiered a musical drama entitled "Slave Song," written in iambic pentameter and rhymed quatrains.

By 1975, I also hosted the 13-week PBS program "From Jump Street: The Story of Black Music," and was a regular actor on the television series, "Brewster Place." I acted in episodes of "Roc" and the PBS special "Zora Is My Name." I have composed over a thousand songs and more than a dozen full-length theater pieces. In 2004, I opened "Jazz at Lincoln Center" in New York, and in 2005, I celebrated the premier of Donnie Betts' "Music is My Life, Politics My Mistress," I also made several appearances on Def Poetry Jam, and was Regents Professor at the University of California at Riverside.

I died on May 29, 2005 in Chicago, Ill. I am survived by my wife, son Napoleon; daughters, Donna, Iantha, Maggie, and Africa; along with 16 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Who am I?

The July guest was that prolific man of prose, Paul Laurence Dunbar.